

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Third Sunday of Advent



The Parish Mass

live streamed from church
during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Sunday 13th December 2020

10.15 am

¶ Keeping everyone safe at St Matthew's

If you have any of the recognised Covid-related symptoms, please self-isolate immediately and seek a test.

For all others, and in accordance with Government guidance and local decision, we respectfully request and require you to:

Go directly to a chair where there is an order of service booklet, and remain there. Please fill up the available chairs in the centre of the nave and transepts first. Do not move from chair to chair, or remove a booklet from another chair. (NB - some chairs in the side aisles have a restricted view).

Please do not move the chairs, or handle any other furniture. Soft furnishings such as church kneelers (hassocks) cannot be used.

You are required to **wear a face covering throughout** unless you belong to one of the medically exempted groups. This must cover both your mouth and your nose. (Plastic visors do not protect others).

At communion - you are asked to ensure that your face covering is in place until the words of administration have been spoken by the priest and you have responded by saying 'Amen'.

After the service - you may wish to light a candle. Please departed via the north door. A monetary offering for your booklet, candle, and towards parish funds may be made there. Please sanitise your hands as you leave.

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¶ Introduction to the Season

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (*adventus*) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement:

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty. (*Charles Wesley*)

The Four Last Things - Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell - have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation, rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. The anticipation of Christmas under commercial pressure has also made it harder to sustain the appropriate sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains 'Maranatha' – 'Our Lord, come' (I Corinthians 16:22). Church decorations are simple and spare, and purple is the traditional liturgical colour. In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas.

The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath was imported into Britain from northern Europe in the nineteenth century, and is now a common practice. The Moravian custom of the Christingle has similarly enjoyed great success in Britain since the latter part of the twentieth century, with the encouragement of the Children's Society; Christingle services may take place before or after Christmas. The Third Sunday of Advent was observed in medieval times as a splash of colour in the restrained atmosphere of Advent (*Gaudete* or 'Rose Sunday'), and the last days of Advent were marked by the sequence of Great 'O' Antiphons, which continue to inspire modern Advent hymns and meditations.

Setting: Communion Service in C & F

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

*When the bell is rung, all **STAND***

The procession enters and the altar is honoured with incense

The Advent Prose

Choir Drop down, ye heavens from above,
and let the skies pour down righteousness.
Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,
and my servant whom I have chosen;
that ye may know me and believe me:
I, even I, am the Lord,
and beside me there is no Saviour:
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A member of the congregation lights the rose pink candle

All Lord Jesus, light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.
**As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now. Amen.**

† In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Greeting

All May the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.
and also with you.

Words of introduction are said

Prayers of Penitence

Invitation to Confession

‘The axe is laid at the root of the trees;
every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down.’
But confident in God’s mercy we confess our sins.

Silence is kept

Confession

All **Lord our God,**
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Kyries

Heavenly Father,
you call us to prepare for the coming of your Son:
forgive us our unreadiness to receive him.
Kyrie eleison.

All Kyrie eleison.

Lord Jesus, you were proclaimed by John the Baptist:
help us to prepare your way.
Christe eleison.

All Christe eleison.

Holy Spirit, you speak through the prophets:
make us attentive to hear your word.
Kyrie eleison.

All Kyrie eleison.

Absolution

May the God of love bring you back to himself,
forgive † you your sins,
and assure you of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Collect

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient
to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

All sit

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Isaiah 60:1-4, 8-11

Reader A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter
and our tongue with songs of joy.

All The Lord has indeed done great things for us.

Then said they among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has indeed done great things for us,
and therefore we rejoiced.

All The Lord has indeed done great things for us.

Restore again our fortunes, O Lord,
as the river beds of the desert.
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed,
will come back with shouts of joy,
bearing their sheaves with them.

All The Lord has indeed done great things for us.

Holy Gospel

John 1:6-8, 19-28

All stand

Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.

All Alleluia.

**All The Lord be with you
and also with you.**

**All Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
"Make straight the way of the Lord",
as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The Homily

All sit

At the end, there may be a time of quiet reflection

Affirmation of Faith

All stand

We say together in faith:

**All Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:

**All for by his will they were created
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:

**All for with his blood, he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

**All the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Please be seated

Priest Let us pray that the light of God's salvation may shine on us
and on our world.

After each petition ...

All Eternal light,
shine in our hearts..

After the final petition

Priest Lord our God, you know our weakness.
May we reach out with joy
to grasp the hand you stretch out to us in Christ,
and so walk more readily in your ways.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

All stand

God will speak peace to his people,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.

All The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

As we are able, let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

The Offertory

Please sit while the altar is prepared

Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord, be pleased with our humble prayers and offerings,
and, since we have no merits to please or cause,
come, we pray, to the our rescue
with the protection of your mercy.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven
to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and singing:

*Choir Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.*

*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Please remain standing

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way,
after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

All Praise to you, Lord Jesus:
Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life:
Lord Jesus, come in glory.

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit,
inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

All **Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

The Lord's Prayer

God does great things for those who trust in him.
Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour Christ has taught us:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
All **we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

Agnus Dei

Choir *O Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.*

Invitation to Communion

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
All **Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The clergy receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Say to those who are fearful in heart, 'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God. He will come and save you.'

Spiritual Communion – *for those at home*

It is an ancient practice of the Church that, when you are prevented from attending the Holy Eucharist, people are invited to express, in the words of St Thomas Aquinas, “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.” Therefore, during this time you are invited to pray this prayer, which may be said as often as you desire:

Act of Reception

All **In union, blessed Jesus,
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,**

(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)

**I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,
for creation and all the blessings of this life,
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,
and resurrection,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.**

(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)

**I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,
I pray you to come into my heart.
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,
my soul, and my mind.
Let nothing separate me from you;
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.
Amen.**

Motet

How beautiful upon the mountains

John Stainer (1840-1901)

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
that publisheth peace; that publisheth salvation;
that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

All stand

We give you thanks, O Lord for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

All Amen.

**Generous God,
you have fed us at your heavenly table.
Set us on fire with your Spirit
that when Christ comes again
we may shine like lights before his face;
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.
Amen.**

Notices for the Community

All sit

¶ Sending Out

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

May the Lord guard you from every danger
and help you to walk always in the way that leads to salvation.
All Amen.

May he inspire you to lead others to Christ by the way you live.
All Amen.

May you never doubt that God will fulfill the promises
he has made to us in Christ.
All Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
All Amen.

The Dismissal

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.
All Thanks be to God.

Voluntary

Allein Gott in Der Höh Sei Her Bohm

The procession departs

Please take this booklet home with you

You are welcome to light a votive candle

Please leave church via the north door,
facing Collingwood Road.

A monetary offering may be made there.

You are most welcome to join us on the green
at the east end of the church
in physically distanced groups of up to six.



A suggested donation towards the production of this booklet